(SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) In view of the improvement in India's external accounts with current exchange reserves of over dollar 16 billion Government of India and the World Bank are of the view that no additional fast disbursing assistance is required in the foreseeable future.

(c) to (e) Government of India has already initiated Portfolio Rationalisation exercises and cancelled dollar 1.65 billion in 1991 and dollar 1.25 billion in 1993, from World Bank projects in various sectors; The Reviews were jointly conducted with the Bank, with a view to identifying amounts which could be cancelled/redeployed; to clear out the non-moving segments of the project portfolio and reduce aid overhang, as well as make headroom for fresh commitments. Savings of approx. dollar 500 million out of IDA cancellations were redeployed for the Social Safety Net adjustment credit.

(f) No, Sir. Does not arise.

Grant of fiscal relief to small scale sector in Punjab

118. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any memorandum to grant necessary fiscal reliefs for the small scale sector in Punjab which is under severe stress because of demand recession and unfavourable fiscal policy of the Government and harassment by dozens of inspectors;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what corrective measures, if any, have been taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) After the Budget 1994-95, many representations have been received from small scale sector in Punjab, requesting for various fiscal reliefs. Broadly the following requests have been made.

(i) To restore excise duty exemptions so as to help the small scale industry;

(ii) To simplify the procedures to be followed by SSI units to comply with the requirements of Central Excise Law; and

(iii) to allow credit of excise duty in respect of steel scrap without production of duty paying documents.

(c) Having regard to the representations received from the industry and others the Government restored the excise exemptions on certain goods like footwear upto a value of Rs. 50 per pair, umbrellas, corrugated boxes, parts of PD pumps, handkerchieves, shawls, soap made without the aid of power etc. Various measures for simplifying the, exise procedures for SSI units have also been taken by the Government. These measures include removal of the requirement of registration with the office of the DC (SSI) or Department of Industries for availing of duty exemption; discontinuation of filing of declaration by units having turnover of less than Rs. 30 lakhs in a year; acceptance of private records of the SSI units for excise purpose; restriction on the visit of SSI units by the inspectors. The facility or taking credit of excise duty has been further relaxed allowing even dealers to issue invoices on the basis fo which credit can by taken and as such the difficulties faced by small units in taking duty credit have been largely taken care of.